ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 16

WALL STREET JOURNAL
16 JULY 1982

Casey's Shadows: A Greater Emphasis On CIA Analysis

In the huge marble entrance hall of the Central Intelligence Agency outside Washington, one wall bears the words, "And Ye Shall Know the Truth and the Truth Shall Make You Free." The wall opposite is inscribed with stars, "In Honor of Those Members of the CIA Who Gave Their Lives in the Service of Their Country." Below the stars, a glass display case holds a book in which each star is followed by the name of the slain CIA member it stands for. Some of the stars have only blank spaces beside them, to mark the names that will never be revealed.

This dual commitment, to secrecy and to knowledge, is the hallmark of a government intelligence agency. Most of our attention to the CIA in the past decade has been concentrated on the secrecy part. But CIA Director William Casey, in a recent interview, wanted mainly to talk about what he was doing about the less glamorous and more important matter of how the agency analyzes and reports information.

He did say that the CIA was now active again in clandestine activities albeit in post-Watergate style. "There's a lot of talk about my being trigger-happy," Mr. Casey defended himself, "but lots of the little countries of the world are under pressure"

Capital Chronicle

by Suzanne Garment

from Soviet-backed forces. "We've gotten out of the business of security assistance, but we're doing lots for them in fields like communications.

"For instance, we helped in the El Salvador election. In Honduras, we put people through school and gave them instruments that can detect how much metal a truck is carrying. Some countries we help just with photographic information, or sensors, or training for anti-terrorist forces. It's all done with local people and just a handful of officers."

But just as important was what was happening to intelligence analysis. The estimates program—the process by which the intelligence community, within the CIA and elsewhere, produces its major pieces of analysis—had been "way down," Mr. Casey said, when he arrived. Part of the problem was simply money: In the seven or eight years prior to the last year of the Carter administration, the agency had "lost 50% of its people and 40% of its funding."

The problem wasn't just money, though. The program "wasn't timely," said Mr. Casey, "and it wasn't relevant. For instance, I asked for an estimate on the Cubans and their activities. I got it after two months—and it neglected to mention Cuba's relationship with the Soviet Union. I sent it back, and it took another while. I asked how long it had been in the works. It turned out that it was begun in June of 1980. It had gone through seven drafts—and the first one was the best."

Moreover, the estimates were too narrow in scope: "They were doing these estimates on a country-by-country basis. They would do one on Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador. But no one was looking at the regional interplay among these countries. And no one was concentrating on the economic component of these situations. In 20 years, we had put only five estimates on the Soviet economy.

"We've got the estimating process streamlined," Mr. Casey said. Instead of the compromising and papering-over of differences that used to go on at the lower levels of the bureaucracy when an estimate was prepared, "we now have the chiefs of all the agencies comprising the intelligence community making the decisions." The issues, as one aide to Mr. Casey put it, are drawn more clearly under the new system. They are made clearer still by Mr. Casey's certainty that "I'm the one responsible for the estimate, and for giving a fair reflection of alternative views."

Mr. Casey has also made some major changes in the way the agency does its short-term analysis. He's taken the people in the analytic sections—who used to be divided up into categories like scientific affairs, societal affairs and strategic affairs—and put them into new sections organized along geographic lines. That way, he said, they have a better chance of producing information that is immediately useful to policymakers. He has also established new analysis centers on two topics of current interest, technology transfer and "insurgency and instability."

Finally, the daily briefing procedure has been changed. Now high officials don't merely get a package of written materials sent over by the agency. Instead they hear a presentation from a briefing officer. He then reports back to headquarters on what types of questions the officials asked and if there might be a need for more of certain kinds of information.

These changes in the way the CIA handles intelligence are all of a piece. They are designed to make disputes in the intelligence community more visible, produce information on the politicians' timetable, reorganize the analysts to make their product conform more closely to decision makers' needs and tighten the day-to-day connection between high government officials and the agency. If they work, they will make the CIA more relevant. They will also make the agency more political, by forcing analysts to attune themselves more closely to the schedules and agendas of the politicians who are their customers.

Mr. Casey's strategy is guaranteed to provoke resistance, but its "political" nature is precisely what makes it promising. After all, it is hard to give a decision maker a good answer unless you are willing to find out what his question is.